

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan (EA/HCP) analyzes the potential environmental impacts resulting from issuance of an incidental take permit by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), pursuant to Section 10(a) of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), to Hyundai Motor America (Hyundai) and to the City of California City (City) for potential take of the federally listed desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) that could result from construction and operation of Hyundai's proposed automotive test course facility (Facility) and the City's water pipeline extension to service the Facility (collectively the proposed project). The purpose of this EA/HCP is to evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives. Hyundai and the City have submitted applications under the ESA for a Section 10 (a)(1)(B) permit to allow the incidental take of the desert tortoise.

Hyundai and the City propose to construct the project on a 4,340-acre site. The City proposes to extend an existing municipal water line for two miles along an existing dirt road to serve the proposed Facility, and Hyundai will build an access road from Highway 58 to the proposed Facility site boundary. The proposed project site is located in the City limits, in Kern County, California, approximately 60 miles southeast of downtown Bakersfield and approximately 0.5 miles north of State Highway 58.

The proposed project would result in impacts to or loss of approximately 4,368.5 acres of desert tortoise habitat due to construction impacts, installation of desert tortoise exclusion fencing around the perimeter of the 4,340-acre project site, installation of the City water line and construction of the off-site access road from Highway 58. Hyundai and the City propose to compensate for the loss of that habitat by acquiring higher quality desert tortoise habitat at a ratio of 1 acre to 1 acre. Hyundai and the City also have proposed minimization measures to reduce project impacts to and potential take of desert tortoise during project construction and operations.